

WHAT THE SOLDIER THINKS

A Monthly Digest of War Department Studies on the Attitudes of American Troops

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"SQUARE DEAL" OR NOT?

Men's answers to this question will influence public opinion
about the peacetime Army

The end of the war has, in some respects, shifted the scope of the Army's responsibility in the sphere of soldier thinking.

Though the Army has in fact always been faced with a tremendously important public relations job, that job now takes on new direction. While the war was being waged, the all-important thing was that soldiers -- whatever their assignments -- should be motivated to fight it to the best of their ability. That motivation rested heavily on *belief in mission*, on acceptance of the soldier role, on the individual's willingness to subordinate himself to the good of the team.

What soldiers thought about the Army was important because their attitudes colored their ability to get the job done -- to win the war. Now, though the fighting part of that job has been done, soldier thinking is still of the utmost importance but for a quite different reason.

From here on out, the pace of reduction of the size of the Army will be speeded up. This means that in the months just ahead several million men will return to civilian life. What these men think of the Army and the treatment they received during their time in the service is going to color their outlook as veterans. *It will also color the attitudes of all civilians toward the Army.*

VETERANS WILL SOUND OFF

Sooner or later most veterans will speak their pieces about the deal they had in the Army. What they say will be accepted as gospel, the inside truth, by

many civilians. They will use that information as a basis for their own judgment as to the value of military training. They will accept it because presumably it comes "straight from the horse's mouth."

The question arises: What sorts of attitudes will most soldiers carry with them when they are mustered out? In short, how will they feel about the deal they have had in the Army?

SQUARE DEAL OR NOT?

Just after V-E Day, the following question was asked of cross sections of white and Negro enlisted men in continental U.S. and in four major overseas theaters:

"In general, do you feel you yourself have gotten a square deal from the Army?"

The answers to this question provide a measure of the extent of resentment felt by enlisted men toward the Army and point the way toward determining the chief causes for that resentment. Because the sample questioned was *world-wide*, this report sheds light on the feelings of all kinds of men in all kinds of outfits.

As the chart on page two shows, the over-all responses to the "square deal" question appear to be quite favorable, with only one man in seven flatly asserting he has not gotten a square deal from the Army.

Further analysis of the attitudes of the men in the sample indicates, however, that on other general morale questions, men who check the middle category on the square deal question have attitudes much

SQUARE DEAL OR NOT?

QUESTION: "In general, do you feel you yourself have gotten a square deal from the Army?"

Percentage of enlisted men saying...

..."Yes, in most ways I have."

33%

..."In some ways, yes; in others, no."

..."No, on the whole I have not gotten a square deal."

more similar to those men who say they have *not* had a square deal from the Army than to those who say they have had a square deal. This conclusion is also borne out by the fact that nearly all of the comments they make are *unfavorable*.

In short, it is apparent that a substantial proportion of soldiers do feel some resentment against the Army and that -- with the discharge rate speeding up day by day -- any steps which the Army takes to alleviate that resentment must be taken with some haste.

SOURCES OF RESENTMENT

Charted in the graph on the opposite page are the major areas of complaint mentioned by those men who feel that they have not had a square deal from the Army.

Job Assignment:

It will be noted that the number one complaint area -- and this is true for all forces -- is *job assignment*. Fully one-sixth of all comments men make about the fact that the Army has not treated them squarely take issue with the Army's classification and assignment system.

The immediate needs of the military throughout the war made impossible any-

thing resembling a perfect assignment system. Obviously all men could not be given jobs in line with their civilian or even military training. Combat losses, for example, made Infantry replacements out of ASTP students, washed-out air cadets, and ASF troops. On occasion, truck drivers have become cooks and cooks truck drivers.

Much of this seemingly poor assignment was justified because unavoidable. On the other hand, many GI's can cite chapter and verse of an example where assignment went haywire. In the last analysis, the ordinary enlisted man can be forgiven if he tends to be short-sighted regarding what he considers his *own* misassignment.

Consider the following typical quotes:

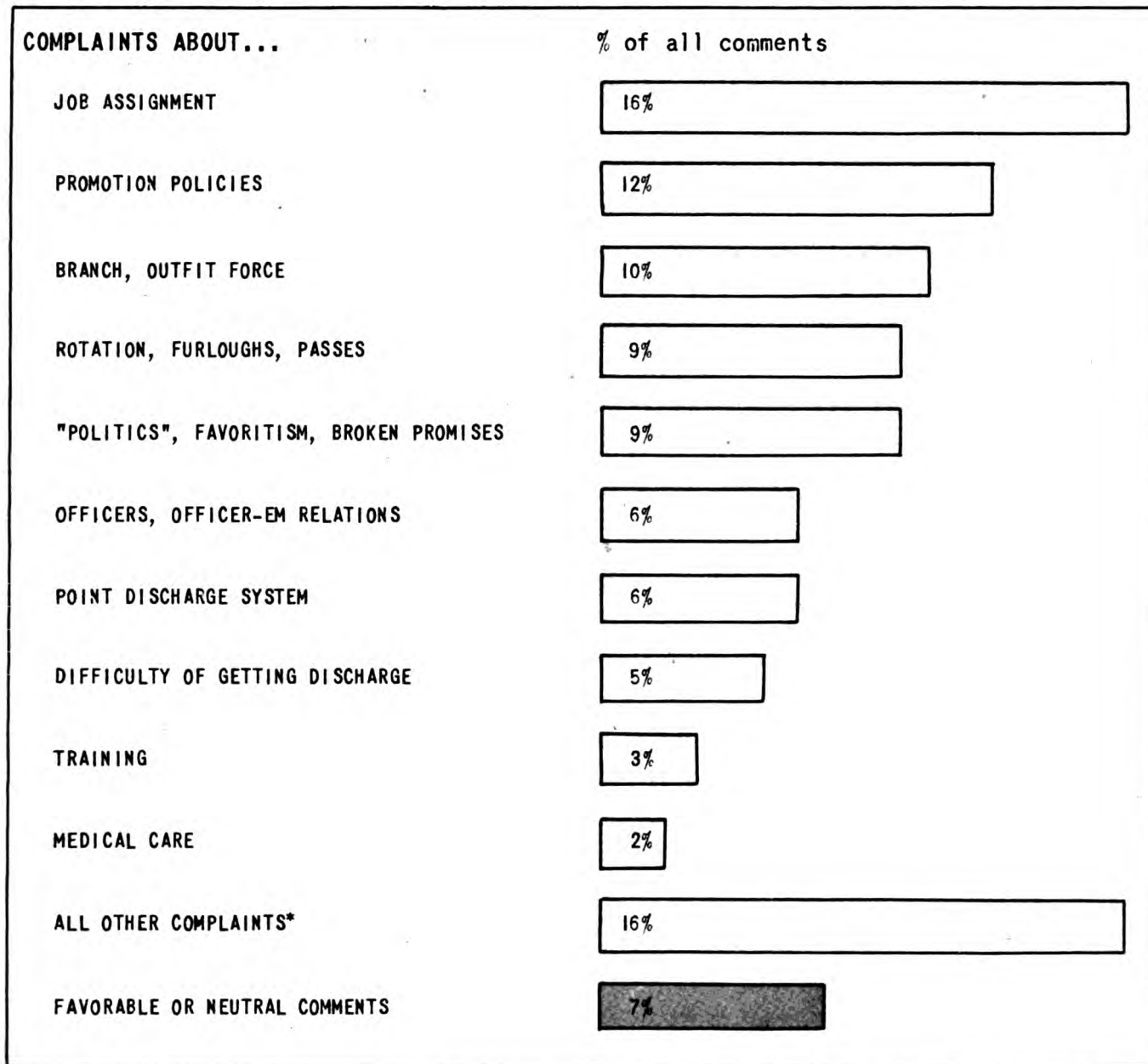
"Job does not use my abilities, civilian experience; was never given the job I should have gotten, where I could have been of most use..."

"A civil engineer graduate with 12 years experience classified as a weather observer-- Nuts!"

"Had practical experience as a B26 mechanic -- instead of sending me in Air Corps where I could put my knowledge to use -- got stuck as a litter bearer."

REASONS WHY SOME MEN FEEL THEY HAVE NOT HAD A "SQUARE DEAL" FROM THE ARMY

Roughly one-third of the enlisted men questioned among a cross section of men in all theaters made some comment in which they gave reasons why they felt they had had or had not had a square deal from the Army. The overwhelming proportion of comments were unfavorable in tone, and while they represent the opinions of a minority of the men questioned (in the sense that most men did not comment one way or the other) they are well worth investigation. Major areas of complaint are listed in rank order in the chart following:



* Included in this category are various miscellaneous complaints, no one of which was voiced by as many as 2% of the men making comments. Among them are such complaints as the following: "I should never have been drafted in the first place"; "racial discrimination"; "Too much snafu in my own case"; Army incompetence; "EM can't help himself or Army"; too many unnecessary restrictions; poor non-coms; unjust demotions in rank; unfair award policy.

"I was a bookkeeper so the Army sent me to airplane mechanic school. At the same time they were sending mechanics and machinists to clerical school. That is just one example."

Promotion Policies:

Few things in Army life can prove more frustrating to enlisted men than failure to get ahead. GI's tend to measure their military progress in terms of stripes. It is only natural that the main gripe of large numbers of men is that they have not been given decent ratings, even though many may agree in theory with one enlisted man who said: "We can't all be sergeants."

As the following selected quotes illustrate, there are many instances in which men are denied promotions through no fault of their own. "Old Debbil T/O" is to blame for some of their troubles; but in most cases the men tend to put the blame squarely on their immediate officers or on "the Army".

"After two years and 8 months, I'm still a pfc -- flying the hump as a radio op. while the T/Sgts keep their behinds warm at Hqters."

"I have been in the army three years. I have spent 32 months overseas. I have done my best to do right haven't got a bad point on my record have had over four hundred days of Combat and still a PFC how does that sound well I know I am not to smart but I have seen them dumber."

"Right now and for the past year I have done the work of a Master Sergeant. For my type of work the Navy and the British give automatic commissions. I know more about my field than anyone in the outfit and I still have two stripes ...disgusted."

"My ability and experience has meant nothing in the Army as far as ratings were concerned. Most units I have been in ratings were on a friendship basis between EM and Officers not on ability or leadership."

"An EM is tied down by a T/O no matter how good he is at his job. He may be held down because there is no opening in the T/O. The army has a tendency to fill a T/O with men that are

available at the time -- regardless of ability."

Branch, Force Assignment:

Men's complaints about their job assignment are closely related to another rather common complaint -- about branch or force assignment. Washed-out cadets, ex-ASTP men, volunteers who could not get the branch they wanted are among the many who complain on that score. In addition, Infantrymen are quite often brownd off about the fact that they are in Infantry. This is also true of soldiers in other, more or less "unpleasant" branches.

"ASTP closed down, I joined the cadets and cadets closed down and I was thrown into the Inf. along with a lot of others. It doesn't take brains to pull a trigger. The training I had in ASTP and cadets did little or no good in relation to the job I am doing now."

"I volunteered and was lead to believe I would have a choice of service and I never even had a chance to try for what I wanted."

"There is no such thing as a square deal in the Infantry."

OTHER AREAS OF COMPLAINT

Rotation, Furloughs:

Military service is a job, tougher than most any other kind of job even when the soldier is not in combat. He cannot leave the Army behind when his work day is over. He lives and sleeps Army. He is surrounded by the Army.

To the soldier, a furlough or rotation back home becomes a tremendously important thing -- more important to his morale than any two-week vacation he might have been given back in civilian life. In view of this fact, it is not surprising that one of the chief areas of resentment against the Army arises from what soldiers consider unfair treatment on furloughs, passes, and rotation.

The feeling tends to be most acute,

of course, among overseas troops:

"I've been overseas three years and I haven't been home since I came to the Army."

"No furloughs or leaves in 3 years has made me bitter. 25 months overseas and 19 months in a forward area. No chance at all of going home."

The Things "They" Do...

The mythical "they" at HQ are the scapegoats enlisted men often blame for their troubles. The things division does to regiment, regiment to battalion, battalion to company are blamed on "them". The soldier whose memory recalls broken promises, favoritism, "politics" -- is very likely to feel he has not had a square deal from the Army.

In a sense, this whole problem is closely associated with officer-enlisted men relations generally. "They" are invariably officers. "They" make the "system".

"The Army is not on a merit but a political system. I'm no politician and dislike the system."

"The army started a lot of programs and gave many promises which they didn't fulfill. I don't believe they had as much foresight as they could have."

"It's not what you know but who you know."

"The Army wouldn't be so bad were our officers well trained in their handling of the enlisted men."

"The Army is set up for a square deal but in some cases it is not carried out by the officers."

THE ARMY'S OPPORTUNITY

All through the rapid demobilization process, the Army will have a golden opportunity to do some public relations work which will pay rewards for many years to come.

By and large, the GI has not been a starry-eyed young hopeful who expected miracles out of the service. Previous researches have shown that his approach has usually been much more level-headed. Most soldiers know that as an organization whose business is winning wars the Army just could not have been counted upon to handle personnel with kid gloves.

Most soldiers know too, that often their own desires and comforts have necessarily been subordinated to the needs of the team. Thus, most of their complaints tend to revolve around real or fancied abuses of this business of subordination.

In addition, few soldiers are so bigoted that they expect an organization as huge as the Army to function with absolute smoothness. Most GI's should prove receptive to orientation which is designed to show -- in terms of facts and not generalizations -- what a tremendous job has been done in this war, despite the pressure of time and almost unsurmountable difficulties.

There is every reason to believe that, with the exception of the small percentage of men who have never really been "absorbed" into the Army and have therefore made up the hard core of chronic grippers, men's attitudes toward the Army can be improved.

The Army has undoubtedly made many mistakes in the handling of enlisted personnel. These mistakes have been unfortunate but often unavoidable.

At the same time, there is much which may be said on the "plus" side of the case. If mistakes have been made, successes have been achieved also. In any event, the Army owes it to itself to examine its record in the light of the public relations job it now faces.

It is still not too late to win friends and influence people among the men who will soon speak with authority about life in the Army -- the soldiers.

SHOULD OFFICERS SHARE ENLISTED MEN'S RESTRICTIONS?

Source: Survey of a cross-section of officers and enlisted men stationed in the United States.

Many of the restrictions and inconveniences which of necessity intrude upon the daily life of the enlisted man, his officers are not required to share. Certain privileges which fall to the lot of officers by reason of their position cannot, as a practical matter, be extended to enlisted personnel.

Now and then, however a situation arises when an officer must decide whether he himself should share a restriction placed against his men. There are no hard and fast rules to guide him in matters of this kind--he won't find the answer in the AR's. But in making up his mind he will want to consider how enlisted men feel about such questions, even though he is not guided entirely by their opinions.

Sharing, as a general principle, is basic to good leadership. In combat it may mean equal participation in the dangers and hardship of the front lines. In garrison it may merely involve a set of minor restrictions. This principle

is aptly stated in ¶34 of FM 21-50: "In your relations with your men in the field never demand any bodily comforts for yourself which are denied to them."

Translating the principle of sharing into the practical realities of garrison life, it comes down to such items as time off, entertainment opportunities, living conditions, etc.

In matters such as these, enlisted men as a group are almost solidly in favor of an equal footing for officers and EM. They are supported in some instances by large numbers of officers themselves. But when it comes to certain other privileges, opinions as to who should enjoy them is sharply divided.

PASSES...FURLOUGHS...CURFEW

For example, a large majority of both commissioned and enlisted personnel see eye to eye on the following statement, less than one out of ten EM and three out of ten officers dissenting:

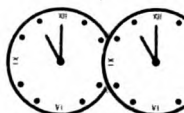
"When enlisted men cannot be given passes or leaves, officers should not get them either."

EQUAL RESTRICTIONS FOR EM AND OFFICERS?

Percentage who agree with these statements...

OFFICERS

66%



35%

"When EM cannot be given passes or leaves, officers should not get them either."

"If EM have to observe curfew, officers should too."

ENLISTED MEN

80%



84%

As pictured in the chart before, 13 out of 20 officers agree with 16 out of 20 enlisted men that suspension of furloughs and passes for anybody of EM should mean similar denial for their officers.

On the issue of curfew observance, enlisted men are even more united in advocating treatment on an equal basis with officers. Out of every 20 EM, fully 17 say that if they are required to be off the streets at a specified hour, then the same restriction should apply to officers. But in this reasoning they are joined by only seven out of 20 officers, the remainder apparently regarding curfew for enlisted men as a needed precautionary measure. (See chart on preceding page).



OFFICER-EM FRIENDLINESS

Looking at the over-all relationship between officers and enlisted men, three out of five EM recommend a closer association between the two groups. *"It would be a lot better,"* they say, *"if officers and enlisted men were more friendly with each other."*

Here again there is wide disagreement between commissioned and enlisted personnel, their respective positions on this question (charted below) being al-

most completely reversed. Most officers do not seem to feel that increased friendliness with their men would be a helpful gesture. What they very likely have in mind is the possible effect on troop discipline.

Even among enlisted men, attitudes on this issue are somewhat conditioned by rank, with two-thirds of the privates urging more friendly relations, compared to slightly more than half of the sergeants.

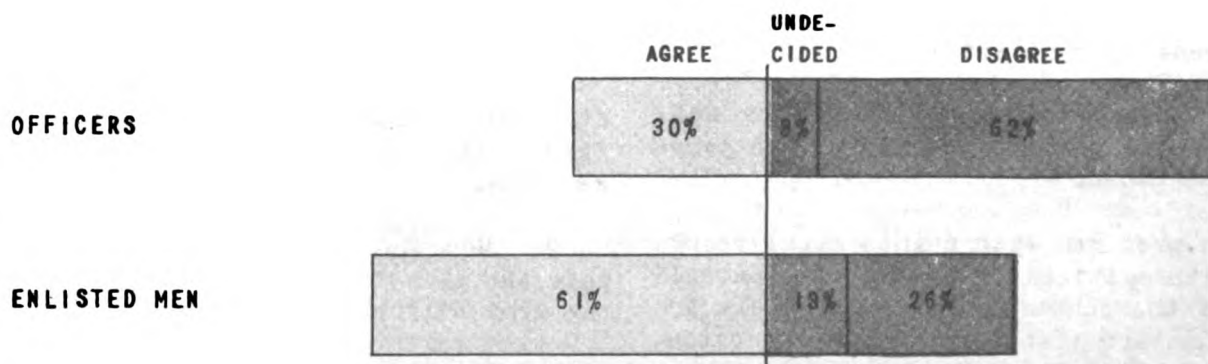
There are undoubtedly many pros and cons on either side of such questions which may be argued at length. But in making decisions related to the sharing of restrictions, officers might well take into account the views expressed here by enlisted men. Especially is this true where the men's views are consistent with sound military practice.

This is not to say that the wishes of EM are to be considered the sole standard for decisions of this type. But the officer who pitches in and shares some of the restrictions of his men is taking a sure step toward winning and holding their respect. Certainly, if his men's opinions cut any ice with him at all, he should not abuse any of the privileges which are rightfully his.

OFFICER-EM RELATIONS

STATEMENT: "It would be a lot better if officers and enlisted men were more friendly with each other."

PERCENTAGE WHO...



THE POINT DISCHARGE PLAN IN OPERATION

Source: Survey of a representative cross-section of enlisted men in overseas theaters and in the U. S.

Announcement of the Army's post-VE Day plan of demobilization set off a wave of discussion among soldiers in every part of the world. The point system upon which discharges are being based became a leading topic of conversation from the caves of Pacific islands to service clubs in Paris. Giving this long-awaited policy a critical going-over, GI's freely debated its pros and cons, weighed it against all possible alternatives.

After about three weeks of this critical kind of analysis, a world-wide "jury" of enlisted men had a chance to register its verdict in a survey conducted by the Research Branch of the Information and Education Division. This jury, composed of a representative cross-section of soldiers in every main foreign theater and in the United States, was asked:

"In general, what do you think of the Army Score Card plan (the point system)?"

The verdict, charted on the following page, was decisively in favor of the War Department plan throughout all theaters surveyed: 70 percent of all enlisted men finding it "fairly good" or "very good" and only 25 percent saying "not so good" or "no good at all," with 5 percent undecided.

Even when men with points equal to or above the critical score are eliminated, so that the count is confined solely to those who are slated for further service under the score card system, the preceding figures remain pretty much the same.

There is little cause for surprise in the heavy majority of soldiers endorsing the point system. For in devising this plan, the War Department took into account the actual wishes of enlisted men as expressed in research surveys. It is only logical, therefore, that there should be widespread approval of a plan which grew out of the preferences voiced by the men themselves.

Over-all, then, enlisted men in every major theater have cast a huge vote of confidence in the point plan. But no plan of demobilization, short of offering discharges to all men, can hope to satisfy everyone in the Army. An important minority--27 percent of the men with less than 85 points--have turned thumbs down on the present system.

Although relatively small, this group merits close study. For one thing they constitute a sizeable morale problem in themselves, and for another they represent a focus of dissatisfaction which may infect the attitudes of other men toward a vital Army program. The "flaws" which they point out can serve as a guide to the company officer who must keep his men oriented on the score card plan.

Who are the critics of the point system? In general, they may be classified into three types:

1. Men--few in number--who are so disgruntled that they would not be satisfied with any plan which kept them in service.

2. Men who may not necessarily oppose the plan itself, but who doubt that the Army will carry it out.

3. Men who complain about the "unfairness" of specific provisions of the plan.

VIEWS ON THE SCORE CARD PLAN

Percentage of enlisted men saying the Score Card Plan is...

VERY GOOD (21%) OR
FAIRLY GOOD (49%)



NO OPINION (5%)



NOT SO GOOD (17%) OR
NOT GOOD AT ALL (8%)



"MEN WHO JUST DON'T LIKE THE ARMY"

A small fraction of the men who reject the point system are plain "browned off" at the Army all around. Misfits in their present situation, the chances are they would belittle any plan which did not take them out of uniform at once. Many of them claim to be in such bad physical shape as to merit discharge on medical grounds--a judgment with which their medical officers do not seem to agree. The sentiment among such men is illustrated by figures from one overseas theater showing that:

...among soldiers with less than 70 points who say they are in poor condition and should be released, but don't expect to be, fully 46 percent are ranged against the point system.

These men just "want out" and apparently shut their eyes to current military realities.

"IT WON'T PAN OUT"

Some of the men who say that the point system is "no good" are probably not thinking of any shortcomings of the plan itself. They are merely voicing their suspicion of the way it will be

carried out. This attitude might be summed up somewhat as follows: "The point score plan may look O.K. on paper, but it will be snafued by the Army."

Skepticism about how the plan will operate is fairly common among enlisted men. Asked if it will really be carried out "as advertised," two men in every five indicate that they are by no means convinced it will be. This figure includes 28 percent who flatly state their belief that the demobilization procedure is not going to work out properly, plus 12 percent who do not commit themselves either way (see chart on page 10).

Confidence in the Army's future handling of the point system, based on the soldier's past experience with promises made to him, is associated with opinions about the system itself. Taking men who feel that the plan will be carried out as it is supposed to be, it is found that only 16 percent of them class it as unsatisfactory. But the percentage disapproving the plan rises to 23 percent among those undecided about how it will be executed and encompasses practically half of all men who predict that it will not be handled as it was meant to be.

There is potential danger in the relationship shown by the above figures. With seven out of ten men in the Army

WILL THE POINT SYSTEM BE CARRIED OUT
THE WAY IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE?

Percentage who say...

Yes, I think it will
be carried out the way
it is supposed to be

60%

Undecided, no opinion

12%

No, I don't think
it will be

28%

40%

putting their seal of approval on the point system, it is obviously starting out with a large reservoir of good-will behind it. But this reservoir will be steadily drained off if, in the eyes of enlisted men, the plan is not administered in good faith.

For the company officer this suggests a twin responsibility. He must take every safeguard to see that the demobilization plan operates fairly within his own unit. Equally important, he should supply his troops with all available information about the plan. Apparent "injustices" should be discussed in the light of actual facts, rumors and complaints met by candid explanation. In the absence of authentic information from their own officers, there is a well known tendency for enlisted men to fall for "inside dope" least creditable to the Army.

The point system, at this writing, has been under way less than three months. Already the first rumblings of discontent are heard. While they primarily result from unavoidable military needs, it would seem that these gripes could be minimized if men were told the whole score about the problems of troop disposition. Emphasis might be placed on the complicated difficulties facing the Army in its task of co-ordinating the activities of vast numbers of personnel.

"IT'S NOT FAIR BECAUSE..."

When it comes to so-called faults in the point system itself, what are the most common complaints made by the one man in four against it? Tabulation of the comments on questionnaires indicates that the objections most often raised by the one man in four who is dissatisfied with the plan come under the following headings:

1. combat credit

A good share of the sniping at the plan comes from ground troops who are veterans of actual combat. The burden of their grievance is that time spent in the front lines does not receive adequate credit in the point system. The present method of basing combat credit upon campaign stars, these men charge, is not a real measure of combat and in fact gives the battle veteran few if any more points than a service unit soldier who may never have been within 200 miles of the front. Some fighting men sound off in blistering GI language about getting five points for a long, hard period in the line, while a rear echelon "desk soldier" draws a star for the same campaign.

The War Department, of course, recognizes that the ideal way of allocating combat credit would be to figure the actual number of days spent at the front. But from the practical standpoint of administration such a method would be well nigh impossible. After careful consideration, therefore, the current system of using campaign stars as a yardstick of combat credit was decided upon.

Another fault many of these veterans find with the plan is that the credit given for children is too heavy in comparison with the allowance for combat and overseas service. A similar point is also made by non-combat men overseas who weigh the 12 points for one child against credit for a whole year of foreign duty. However, in the original survey which led to the point system, children finished in the forefront of discharge factors along with combat.

REACTIONS OF VARIOUS TYPES OF TROOPS TOWARD THE POINT SYSTEM

Percentage of men with less than 85 points who say that the point system is...

"Not so good" or
"Not good at all"

AVERAGE OF ALL TYPES

27%

Ground troops,
Combat veterans

42%

Service troops

27%

AAF non-flying
personnel

24%

Ground troops,
not in combat

22%

AAF flying personnel

13%

Married, no children

32%

Single

28%

Fathers

23%

35 years old and over

33%

30 to 35 years

30%

25 to 29 years

27%

Under 25 years

26%

Classing the point system as "not so good" or "no good at all" are 42 percent of ground combat veterans with less than the critical score, compared to the average of 27 percent. But as a group, even veterans of ground combat return a majority vote in favor of the plan.

2. age

The omission of age as a factor in the point system is the direct result of the preferences voiced by a cross-section of men in the Army, most of them feeling that other things were more important. Cutting age out of the scoring has naturally led to some resentment among older men in the service. But the percentage of those 35 and over, with less than 85 points, who are unfavorable toward the point system is only six percent higher than the general average.

Although the bulk of older men think the demobilization plan is a good one as it stands, they nevertheless account for much of the criticism in the Zone of Interior.

3. dependency

Childless married men are supporters of the point plan by a margin of about two to one. A good many of them, however, remark that credit should have been allowed for wives. Similar credit is also asked by men with dependent fathers or mothers.

4. longevity

Preference for a policy of "first in, first out," as would be expected, is strongest among men who have been in the Army for the longest stretch. Even in the group with three years or more of service, however, only 30 percent set themselves against the plan.

Through the coming months, attitudes toward the Army's policy of redeployment and readjustment will be a central factor in the morale of troops. The course of opinion toward this policy in large measure rests with unit officers. It is

at the company level that operation of the point system can often be smoothed out or broken down. It is here that enlisted men see the plan in action and form their views accordingly. It is here, therefore, that men should be set on the right track about the plan and kept informed on its progress through a continuous "fill-in" program. Material presented in this report may serve as a nucleus for such a program.

Orientation on the subject of the point system has the initial advantage

of a great body of favorable soldier opinion behind it.

What some high-score men appear to have forgotten is that the program of reduction in the Army's strength cannot be scheduled to be completed at once, or even within a few months. The big job of large-scale discharges of soldiers has to be carried out by the Army with one hand while it is fulfilling the nation's essential military obligations with the other.

THINGS COMBAT SOLDIERS WOULD CHANGE IN THE ARMY

Source: Representative sample of Infantrymen in four Divisions overseas.

Every soldier in the Army has his pet gripe--some grievance, real or fancied, which he would like to see remedied above all others.

To get some data on the "one thing" about the Army that bothers combat men most, the following question was included in a recent survey of veteran Infantry divisions:

"If you had a chance to change one thing in the Army, what would you change?"

The improvement most widely sought by the men in this sample is some form of relief from the hard grind of combat. Give a better break to the fighting man, ask one-fourth of these veterans, chiefly by rotating combat and service troops in the front lines or by setting a definite limit on the time a man is required to serve in battle.

Right behind this complaint in number of mentions is the desire for better relations between officers and enlisted

men. More equality and fewer petty restrictions is a change which many an EM in this as in other surveys would like to see.

"I'd like for officers to be one of the men and not a dictator who treats a man that is fighting like a dog. We are human."

"...the difference in social standards between enlisted man and officers."

Leading suggestions, each mentioned by more than five percent of the men, are listed below:

Better break for combat troops, rotate front and rear-echelon troops, set a time limit on combat 26%

Officers, better selection and training of officers, show more consideration for EM, take more responsibility, stop harassing EM. 11%

Fairer rotation and TD policy. 9%

Less discipline and training, more passes when in rest phase. 7%

HAS ARMY EXPERIENCE CHANGED COMBAT SOLDIERS?

The soldier who has been through combat in this war is in some respects not the same man as the rookie who first swapped civilian clothes for a GI uniform. At least that is the opinion of a majority of Infantry veterans questioned in an overseas survey.

Six out of ten men sampled note some change in themselves--for better or for worse--which they attribute to their military experience. Of the changes these veterans report, roughly one-third may be regarded as desirable, about two-thirds as undesirable.

DESIRABLE CHANGES

Under the "desirable" heading are such traits as:

Added maturity, self-confidence, self-reliance and endurance. . . 9%

Increased appreciation of "good things": freedom, civilian life, etc. 6%

New patience, tolerance, sociability, capacity for working with others. 5%

Quotations illustrating some of these advantageous changes follow:

"I have become serious and quieter."

"The Army has made a man of me and it hasn't hurt me one bit."

"It has made me more polite, wiser and dependable" "Being able to get along with others."

"I think more broadmindedly of the future."

UNDESIRABLE CHANGES

Topping the list of changes which may be classed as undesirable is an alleged decline in physical or mental condition. The claim of deterioration in health is based on physical grounds by about one-tenth of the men, while an equal number talk about new psychological tensions: nervousness, restlessness and irritability.

Also mentioned by one man in ten are characteristics like bitterness, cynicism and callousness which they say were moulded into them by their experiences in the Army. Others describe themselves as aged beyond their years (7 percent) or given to greater moral laxity (6 percent).

Here is how some of the men express such undesirable developments:

"It has made me worse to get along with. I don't care for anything or anybody at all."

"I am nervous now, worse than I ever was before. Irritable most of the time. I can't control myself."

"The most important thing is in my health as a whole. My nerves and stomach, which never bothered me before, do now."

How many of these so-called changes are actual ones for which Army life and combat are responsible and how many are imaginary, or would have cropped up in civilian life anyhow, is of course impossible to say. It is of some importance, nevertheless, to note the changes which these combat veterans think were brought by their experience as soldiers.

LEARNING THROUGH ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Source: Experimental study of selected samples of recent inductees at a Reception Center.

The company officer is cast by the Army in a wide variety of roles. He is administrator and combat leader, judge and adviser, mess supervisor, personnel director and a dozen other specialists in one. Of all the parts he is called upon to play, however, few are more important than his duties as an instructor.

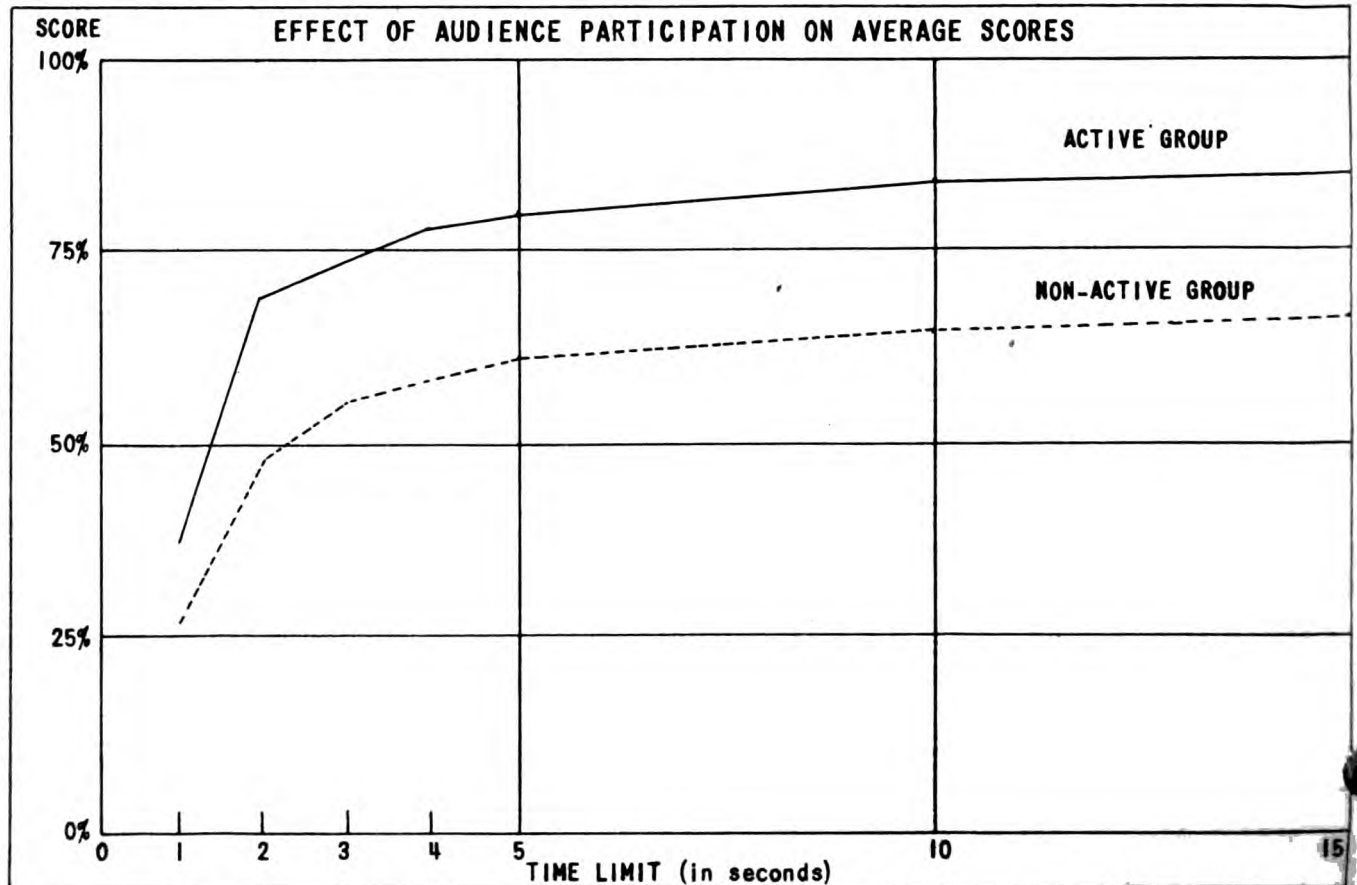
Modern war is a school in which the soldier-student is required to master a many-sided curriculum of weapons, equipment and skills. It offers an ever-shifting program, with new battlefield conditions and experiences bringing frequent changes in the tactics and tools

of our fighting and supply services. New lessons must be learned and more often than not it is the company officer's job to see they are learned.

THE OFFICER AS TEACHER

No one assumes that the average officer is an experienced teacher. At the same time, however, there is no reason why he cannot do a good job as an instructor simply by mastering certain teaching techniques.

The company officer's responsibility as teacher begins in basic training when the all-important job of converting civilians into soldiers is dropped in his lap. In a sense, that responsibility



never ends. This has been proved again and again as varying military needs led to the necessity for imparting new information to troops.

The device studied here is one of getting an audience of enlisted men to participate actively in the teaching process. As will be seen, the active participation method has marked advantages over the more conventional straight lecture technique.

THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUE

To test the relative effectiveness of audience participation as a teaching technique, an experiment was conducted with two types of sound film strips which teach the Signal Corps phonetic alphabet. Both films were exactly the same in every respect, except that one called for the audience to recite aloud at certain points. Thus each film presented a summary of the phonetic alphabet in the form of a review of the letters and their corresponding names. But whereas one film flashed both the letter and its phonetic name on the screen, the second flashed only the letter and the audience had to "sing out" the name. For example, the letter "A" appeared and the audience had to shout the phonetic name--"Able."

Each film was shown to carefully matched groups of men whose backgrounds (education, AGCT scores, etc.) were equated. Half the groups were shown the film-strip which had no active review; half were shown the film-strip which had an active review. The two audiences were then given a written quiz on the phonetic alphabet, and in addition, some of the men were given an oral test in which they were timed by stop watch on how long it took them to give the correct phonetic name for each letter.

The differences in the test scores made by men who saw the two film strips are therefore a measure of the relative effectiveness of the audience participation device employed in one of the strips.

The graph on the preceding page traces the average scores made within various

time limits by men who saw each film. (Scores are based on oral tests.) It is clearly apparent that the group which viewed the active participation strip proved superior to the group which saw the non-participation strip. Active participation accounted for a definite and consistent increase in their scores at each time level.

Instruction in the Army generally falls into two distinct phases: the presentation phase and the practical or "learning by doing" phase. The Army has long recognized that teaching by having the men actually perform the operations they are supposed to learn is an extremely effective method. Where Army instruction may be in danger of missing the mark, however, is in the presentation phase, where the "straight lecture" method is often employed. This method does not always prove as effective as it might--particularly where difficult material is being taught to less intelligent men and men whose motivation to learn is not high.

The technique reported on here steps up the effectiveness of the presentation phase of military instruction. During this phase a minimum objective is to get the student to absorb enough knowledge so that he can go on to the next phase: actual practice. As far as the phonetic alphabet is concerned, this minimum standard would be met by allowing the learner 15 seconds in which to recall a name. At this level (see graph) the participating audiences got an average of 84 percent of phonetic names correct, compared with a score of 66 percent for the non-participating audiences.

In other words, active participation accounted for an average gain of 18 percent within the 15-second time limit.

WHERE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION "PAYS OFF"

A more detailed analysis of test results indicates that there are certain instances where audience participation is especially valuable in getting information across.

1. If the material is difficult for men to grasp.

2. If men have little motivation to learn.

3. If the audience is composed of men in the lower intelligence brackets.

If material is difficult...

On the basis of test results, it was possible to divide the phonetic alphabet names into "easy" and "more difficult" groups of 13 letters each. (For example, men had less difficulty in learning "X-ray" for "X" than they did "Tare" for "T.") As may be seen from the table following, participation produced even higher gains with the more difficult names than it did with the easy names.

Average Scores on...

	<u>"Easy" Names</u>	<u>"More Diffi- cult" Names</u>
Participating		
Audience.	87%	82%
Non-participating		
Audience.	79%	54%
GAIN	8%	28%

When motivation is low...

The experiment provided a demonstration of the effectiveness of the audience participation technique among men who lack high motivation to learn. To check this effect, half the men were "motivated" in advance by being told that they would be tested after the film-strip showing. When the test scores for all men were examined, it was found that highest gains were scored among men who viewed the active participation strip and were not warned of the test in advance. Thus it can be seen that the participation technique worked best among men of relatively lower incentive to learn. (See table following.)

Average Scores when...

	<u>Test was announced in advance</u>	<u>Test was not announced in advance</u>
Participating		
Film Audience. . .	87%	84%
Non-Participating		
Film Audience. . .	81%	66%
GAIN.	6%	18%

Among men with lower intelligence...

The company officer faced with a student audience composed of men whose average intelligence level is low has an especially difficult job. Here again, employment of the active participation technique should prove helpful.

The technique works especially well with lower intelligence men. This conclusion is borne out by a comparison of the test scores of low intelligence men (AGCT Grades IV and V) and the scores of high and medium intelligence men (AGCT Grades I, II and III). The following table shows that active participation pushed up the scores of Grade IV and V men more sharply than it did the scores of men in the I, II and III group.

Average Scores of...

	<u>Low AGCT Group</u>	<u>High-Medium AGCT Group</u>
Participating		
Film Audience. . .	71%	96%
Non-Participating		
Film Audience. . .	50%	91%
GAIN.	21%	5%

A glance at the schedule for any average training week will show a variety of opportunities for making use of the audience participation technique. How it can be applied to his own teaching problems is a question which deserves the study of every officer and noncommissioned instructor.

This is the final issue of WHAT THE SOLDIER THINKS.

Since December, 1943, this monthly digest has reported to officers in the field, both in the U.S. and in every overseas theater, the results of attitude and opinion surveys conducted among American troops by the Research Branch, Information and Education Division.

Though these surveys have probed the thinking of soldiers on a wide variety of subjects, nearly always they were designed to get a line on that almost indefinable something without which no Army can win victories whatever its materiel strength -- *morale*. It has been the major concern of WHAT THE SOLDIER THINKS to provide officers in the field with findings and ideas which would aid them in their efforts to achieve and sustain a high level of morale in their commands. With victory, the urgency for such a digest has disappeared and it has been the decision of the War Department to cease its publication.

HOW THE STUDIES ARE MADE

The articles in this bulletin are based on attitude surveys conducted by the Research Branch, Information and Education Division, and the research units reporting to the commanding generals of the several theaters.

The staff of the Research Branch is composed of Army officers who are experienced in the field of surveys, together with a number of civilian specialists. Techniques have been developed, tested and adjusted to fit the Army's problems.

The basic steps in conducting a study are as follows:

1. The questionnaire is prepared in consultation with the War Department branches, or the theater command immediately concerned. Questions are carefully chosen to provide the exact type of information desired.
2. The questionnaire is pre-tested. That is, the questions are tried out on small groups of men to determine whether they are meaningful and understandable to the type of men or officers to be studied.
3. The project is cleared for action with the commands in which the study is to be made.
4. The number of men to be surveyed is set sufficiently large to insure statistically reliable findings.
5. The men to be surveyed are selected to insure as true a cross section of the group to be studied as possible. A cross section of enlisted men in the United States, for example, is so drawn as to give proper proportionate representation to each branch of the Army, to men in each stage of training, and to men stationed in the various sections of the country. It is, of course, possible to get cross sections of a single branch, of a division, of Negro troops, or any other portion of the Army desired.
6. The men complete questionnaires under conditions of absolute anonymity. They are assembled in small groups, and hear a short introduction given by a specially trained class leader. This introduction makes it clear to the men that only their frank opinion is wanted, and that they are not being tested or spied on. No names or serial numbers are placed on the questionnaires. Ordinarily, illiterates or men of very low intelligence are interviewed by specially trained enlisted men.
7. The data are analyzed by specialists in attitude research analysis. Reports of these analysts are released to agencies concerned, and also form the basis for the material presented in this bulletin.

The procedure outlined above is that followed in the typical cross section survey. Other techniques, of course, are employed from time to time in special situations.